

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for activating a subscriber account for providing a network service, comprising the steps of:

receiving initial information from a subscriber;

storing said received information;

5 providing a transaction processing device to said subscriber;

receiving captured information from said subscriber through said transaction processing device;

utilizing said captured information to receive verifying information about said subscriber; and

10 comparing said verifying information with said initial information to authenticate said subscriber.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said captured information is information provided to said subscriber by a third party certifying authority.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said initial information is received by a provider of said subscriber account.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said captured information is information that has not been previously provided to said provider of said subscriber account by said subscriber.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein said receiving captured information step includes the step of:

receiving by said transaction processing device identifying information from said subscriber, wherein said identifying information is captured by said transaction processing device.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said receiving captured information step further includes the step of:

receiving securely from said transaction processing device said captured information by a remote server associated with said provider of said subscriber account.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein at least a portion of said captured information is encrypted prior to being transmitted to said remote server over a communication network.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said encryption is performed utilizing a private key unique to said transaction processing device.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said captured information is further encrypted utilizing a public key of said subscriber account provider.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein said encryption is performed utilizing a public key of said subscriber account provider.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein said communications network is a public network.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said public network is capable of TCP/IP communication.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein said utilizing said captured information step comprises the steps of:

decrypting said received captured information by said subscriber account provider utilizing a public key of said transaction processing device in order to verify the source of said received captured information.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said received captured information is further decrypted utilizing the private key of the payment processor.

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:
providing at least a portion of said decrypted information to a third party server; and
receiving said verifying information from said third party server in response to
providing said decrypted information to said third party server.

16. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:

retrieving, by said subscriber account provider, verifying information from said remote server, wherein said verifying information had been previously retrieved by said subscriber account provider from a third party server.

17. The method of claim 5, wherein said identifying information is received by said transaction processing device by scanning a card across a card reader associated with said transaction processing device.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said card reader is part of said transaction processing device.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein said captured information is a driver's license number.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said captured information is provided to said subscriber by a provider of said transaction processing device.

21. The method of claim 2, wherein said certifying authority provides independent verification of said subscriber based in part on said initial information.

22. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
activating said transaction processing device for performing said network service upon successful verification of said subscriber.

23. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
activating said subscriber account for providing said network service upon successful verification of said subscriber.

24. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
activating said subscriber account for providing said network service upon successful verification of said subscriber and said transaction processing device.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein said activating step comprises the step of: associating said subscriber account with said transaction processing device; and enabling said subscriber account.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of: transmitting data back to said transaction processing device.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said transmitted data is configuration data.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein said network service is a payment processing service.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein said payment processing service includes credit card processing.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein said payment processing service is selected from the group consisting of debit card processing, check verification, check guarantee, payroll processing, gift certificate issuance, issuance of electronic tickets, and issuance of money order.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein said initial information is provided to a payment processor by said subscriber by entering information at a web site maintained by said payment processor.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein said information is entered by said subscriber via a wireless device.

33. The method of claim 1, wherein said transaction processing device is a standalone internet enabled transaction processing device.

34. The method of claim 1, wherein said transaction processing device is a standalone internet enabled wireless transaction processing device.

35. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
providing by a provider of said subscriber account an identifying token to said subscriber separate from said transaction processing device.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein said identifying token is a username and a password.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein said identifying token is provided to said subscriber electronically in response to receiving said initial information from said subscriber.

38. The method of claim 35, wherein said identifying token is selected by said subscriber.

39. The method of claim 35, wherein said identifying token is selected by a provider of said subscriber account.

41. The method of claim 35, wherein said received captured information includes said identifying token that had been previously provided to said subscriber by said subscriber account provider.

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42. A method for electronic authentication of a subscriber requesting a subscriber account for providing a network service, comprising the steps of:

providing a transaction processing device to said subscriber;

receiving initial information from said subscriber, wherein said initial information is received by a provider of said subscriber account;

storing said received information in a database associated with said provider of said subscriber account;

receiving captured information from said subscriber through said transaction processing device securely via a public network;

utilizing said captured information to receive verifying information about said subscriber;

comparing said verifying information with said initial information by said provider of said subscriber account to authenticate said subscriber; and

enabling said subscriber account for performing said network service.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein said transaction processing device is provided to said subscriber by mail.

44. The method of claim 42, wherein said subscriber purchases said transaction processing device from a retail location.

45. The method of claim 42, wherein said initial information is received from said subscriber through said transaction processing device.

47. The method of claim 42, wherein said provider of said subscriber account is a payment processor.

$$P_{\text{eff}} = \frac{P_{\text{max}}}{1 + \frac{P_{\text{max}}}{P_{\text{sat}}}}$$

48. A method for electronic authentication of a subscriber requesting a subscriber account for providing a payment processing service, comprising the steps of:

receiving initial information from said subscriber, wherein said initial information is received by a payment processor;

5 storing said received information in a database associated with said payment processor;

providing a point of sale terminal to said subscriber;

receiving by said point of sale terminal identifying information from said subscriber, wherein said identifying information is captured by said transaction processing device, wherein at least a portion of said captured information is encrypted by said point of sale terminal;

receiving said encrypted information from said point of sale terminal via a public network;

decrypting said received encrypted information by said payment processor;

providing at least a portion of said decrypted information to a third party server;

receiving verifying information from said third party server wherein said verifying information is related to said decrypted information provided to said third party server;

comparing said verifying information with said initial information by said payment processor to authenticate said subscriber; and

20 activating said subscriber account for performing said payment processing service upon authentication of said subscriber.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein said point of sale terminal utilizes a private key unique to said point of sale terminal for said encryption of said captured information.

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51. A method for activating a subscriber account for providing a network service, comprising the steps of:

receiving an application from a subscriber for a subscriber account;

performing due diligence on said received application based in part on said received application;

providing a transaction processing device to said subscriber to provide said network service upon completion of said step of performing due diligence; and

electronically verifying that an individual activating said subscriber account via said transaction processing device is authorized to activate said subscriber account.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein said network service is a payment processing service.

53. The method of claim 51, wherein said transaction processing device is a point-of-sale terminal.

54. A method for activating a subscriber account for providing a network service, comprising the steps of:

providing a transaction processing device to a subscriber, wherein said subscriber provides a network service;

5 receiving an application from said subscriber for a subscriber account;

receiving information from an individual through said transaction processing device to activate said subscriber account; and

electronically verifying that said individual activating said subscriber account is authorized to activate said subscriber account.

55. The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of:

performing due diligence on said received application based in part on said received application prior to receiving said information from said individual through said transaction processing device.